

# The Links Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111564
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stockton-on-Tees
<b>Inspection number</b>	310630
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graeme Clarke

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	206
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Jonathan Erskine
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Angela Puddick
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Carnoustie Drive Eaglescliffe Stockton-on-Tees TS16 9ES
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 785950
<b>Fax number</b>	01642 785950

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects:

- the progress pupils make throughout the school
- the extent of pupils' personal development and well-being
- the consistency of teachers' marking to promote learning
- how information is used to support learning by all pupils, particularly those at risk of underachievement.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found much evidence to confirm that the school's own evaluations, as recorded in its self evaluation form, are justified and these have been included in the report.

The inspectors gathered evidence from analysing the views of parents as expressed in their questionnaires, from lesson observations, looking at pupils' work, evaluating assessment information, scrutinising documents and conducting interviews and discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils and one governor.

## Description of the school

This average size primary school serves an area with relatively high social advantage. A well below average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. None have a statement of special educational need. Most pupils have a White British heritage. A minority come from other, mainly Asian backgrounds with a very small number learning to speak English as an additional language. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision is in the Nursery and Reception classes. Voluntary after-hours care is available for children aged three to 11 years who are on the school roll.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school in which pupils make excellent academic progress and reach very high levels of personal development. Their well-being is central to the exceptionally effective and inclusive education the school provides. The headteacher, well assisted by her leadership team, very effectively ensures that the whole staff successfully uphold the school's values that every child matters. Strong links with parents, the local authority, heritage and outdoor centres, local industry and with schools in other countries offer huge benefit to pupils' education and development. An overwhelming majority of parents hold the school in the highest regard. One parent's comments sum up their views. 'My child thoroughly enjoys attending school and his individual needs are met. He is progressing very well and is encouraged to challenge himself to achieve. This has given him greater confidence. He also enjoys taking part in extra-curricular activities'.

After making excellent progress in the EYFS classes pupils begin Year 1 with above average standards and especially high levels of personal and social development and language skills. The school very successfully helps pupils to improve on these good standards as they move through Years 1 to 6. Their achievement is excellent and they leave school with exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science. Results in all subjects in the Key Stage 2 statutory assessments have been significantly above average for several years which is a very striking record. Many pupils presently in Year 6 also make excellent progress and have already reached standards beyond the level expected for their age. Their improvement in reading and mathematics is particularly impressive. Boys and girls do equally well. Careful analysis of a rigorous record of pupils' performance leads to very effective support which ensures those pupils at risk of slipping behind or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress.

The school is a joyful, happy and caring community where excellent pastoral care ensures pupils' well-being and a wide, rich curriculum leads to outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' grasp of the importance of diet and physical activity is truly reflected by the Healthy School and Activemark awards. Many enjoy successful involvement in voluntary sports and dance activities. Pupils act considerately and politely in the communal parts of the school. They are very aware of 'stranger-danger' and how to report anything untoward. Pupils thoroughly enjoy everything the school has to offer. They get great pleasure from learning, become fully involved in lessons and work very industriously. Attendance is above average. Behaviour is impeccable. They work very collaboratively and play well together. Older pupils willingly support others, for example as playground buddies and when playing with children from the EYFS in the after-hours care group. Pupils from Reception to Year 6 take justifiable pride in their contribution as school councillors which significantly improves the school environment and minimises bullying. Pupils willingly support activities to help others both locally and nationally. The school's involvement in international links gives pupils a good understanding for their age of their place in the global community. These positive outcomes reflect the high value the school places on promoting community cohesion and the excellent contribution it makes to it. Effective partnership with local industry and secondary schools and experience of well planned enterprise activities, coupled with excellent social development and strong basic skills, prepare pupils exceptionally well for their future.

A very rich and exciting curriculum most successfully develops pupils' standards in all subjects. Excellent work in art, design and technology, music and dance all contribute substantially to

pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. Outstanding teaching inspires pupils to want to achieve highly. Everyone, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, can participate fully in lessons. Pupils are confident that they know what their teachers expect of them. Carefully planned, well suited activities and skilfully led discussion strongly motivate all pupils who, in turn, work with commendable endeavour and take care with their work. Frequent and mostly effective marking congratulates pupils on their accomplishments and usually gives pupils clear pointers towards improving their work. However, this effective approach is not yet consistent throughout.

Outstanding leadership and management very effectively ensure that the whole staff team pulls together to enable pupils to achieve and develop exceptionally well. Together they ensure that pupils are extremely well cared for and supported. All procedures for safeguarding, child protection and risk assessment meet government requirements. Governance is excellent. Governors' close involvement gives them a vital first hand view of the school's work which is enhanced by informative reports from senior staff and the local authority. Together with senior leaders, they accurately evaluate and identify the school's strengths and areas for development, then plan in an exemplary way to make improvements. Governors meet all statutory responsibilities. The school has fully addressed issues from the last inspection. Rigorous procedures enable staff to develop their knowledge and skills. The school's determination to improve, coupled with an excellent track record of outstanding progress and very high standards, gives the school an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Children get off to an excellent start in the EYFS. Their skills and abilities on entry to Nursery are broadly typical for their age but are below expectation in aspects of social and emotional development. Excellent induction and welfare arrangements help children to settle and thrive in the warm and supportive environment. Since the last inspection new arrangements for teaching sounds and letters have had a very positive impact on raising standards of early literacy. Children make remarkably good progress and by the end of the Reception in 2008 their skills and abilities were above average in all areas of learning, especially in personal and social development. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning and each other are excellent. Children thoroughly enjoy the very effective free-flow use made of both indoor and outdoor facilities to stimulate their natural curiosity, interest and imagination. Excellent teaching enables children quickly to learn to work well, both independently and cooperatively. The curriculum cleverly balances activities where children discover things for themselves and those where they work with an adult. Outstanding leadership fosters excellent teamwork to provide a vibrant and interesting learning environment with clear plans for its development. Effective assessment procedures, based on a sound knowledge of how young children learn and develop, support and extend children's learning and identify areas for improvement. Adults know the children well, and ensure they are safe and properly cared for, both during the day and in the after-hours voluntary provision. Parents are delighted about how well their children have settled, enjoy school, and make progress.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure teachers are consistent in giving pointers to improvement when marking pupils' work.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

<sup>1</sup>Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No



**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

19 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Links Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees, TS16 9ES

Mr Kingston and I really enjoyed our recent visit to inspect your school. Thank you for helping us when we came into your classrooms and assembly to see you at work. You were very polite and helpful and we did enjoy talking with those of you who we met. We were pleased to see how much you enjoy taking part in lessons and activities during and after school, how you value the help you get and the friendships you make. You are very well behaved and polite to others in lessons and outside. We were pleased to see how you contribute to life in school and how you help others who are less fortunate than you. I know the headteacher and all the staff are very proud of you.

Your school is outstanding in every way. All the adults in the school look after you very well and that is why you feel safe and happy. Last year everyone made outstanding progress and reached very high standards. When we spoke with some of you we found you clearly know the levels of work your teachers want you to reach. We were especially pleased that those of you in need of extra help do really well.

We were delighted to see how you take care to make your work neat. When your teachers mark your books they always tell you how well you are doing. On occasions they suggest ways to help you improve. Whenever they mark your books we have asked all your teachers to help you be clear about what you need to do to improve your work

You have many excellent opportunities at The Links to learn about life and these should stand you in very good stead for the future. I hope that you all do really well.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Clarke

Lead inspector